GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:339
ANSWERED ON:02.03.2005
INDIAN AND FOREIGN DELEGATION VISITS
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of foreign dignitaries who visited India during each of the last two months and till date;

(b) the details of Indian delegations who visited various countries during the same period;

(c) the details of discussions held in each case and the outcome thereof; and

(d) the areas where co-ordinated action by the various countries with the India have been agreed upon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) The following Foreign Dignitaries have visited India during the last two months and till 15.2.2005:

(1) Mr Samuel Schmid, Vice President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports visited India from November 29 - December 1, 2004.

(2) Mr. Vladimir V. Putin, President of the Russian Federation visited India from 3-5.12.2004.

(3) Mr. Driss Jettou, Prime Minister of Morocco visited India from 6 to 8 December 2004

(4) Mr. Ehud Olmert, Vice Prime Minister of Israel visited India from 6 to 9 December 2004.

(5) President of Slovakia, Dr. Ivan Gasparovic paid a State visit to India during 11-15 December 2005.

(6) The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato` Seri Abdullah Ahmed Badawi, paid an official visit to India from 19-23 December 2004.

(7) Mr. Rattan Kumar Ajodhia, Vice-President of Suriname visited India from January 5 to 11, 2005.

(8) Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar, Mr. Abdullah Hamad Al-Attiyah visited India from 6-9 January 2005.

(9) Mr. Sidi Morro Sanneh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Gambia visited India from 11-13 January 2005.

(10) The Foreign Minister of Solomon Islands Mr. Laurie Chan visited India from 17 to 18 January 2005.

(11) Mr. Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada visited India from January 17-18, 2005.

(12) The President of Chile, Dr. Ricardo Lagos paid a State visit to India from 18 to 22 January 2005 on an official visit.

(13) Dr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal visited India from 23-24 January 2005.

(14) His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan paid a State Visit to India from January 23-29, 2005 as the Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations.

(15) Mr. Raymond Ramazani Baya, Foreign Minister of Democratic of Republic of Congo visited India from 1-4 February 2005.

(16) President of Iceland, Mr. Olafur Grimsson paid a State visit to India during 3-9 February 2005.

(17) Finnish Foreign Minister Mr. Erkki Tuomioja visited India from Feb 6-10, 2005.

(18) Czech Dy. PM, Milan Simonovsky visited India during 8-12 Feb 2005.

(19) The President of Italy, Mr. Carlo Azeglio Ciampi paid a State Visit to India from 12-16 February 2005.

(20) British Foreign Secretary Mr. Jack Straw visited India from 16-18 February 2005.

(21) President of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer paid a State Visit to India during 16-21 Feb. 05

(b) The details of Indian Delegations, which visited various countries during the same period, are as follows:

(1) Minister of External Affairs visited Seoul, Republic of Korea (ROK) from December 14 - 16, 2004.

(2) Minister of External Affairs visited Oman in 25-26 December 2004.

(3) Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Saudi Arabia from 25-27 December 2004.

(4) Minister of External Affairs visited United Arab Emirates on December 27-28, 2004.

(5) Minister of External Affairs led the Indian delegation at the Special ASEAN Leaders` Meeting on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005.

(6) MOS (EA) visited Nairobi, Kenya from 7 to 10 January 2005 to attend signing ceremony of Sudan Peace Agreement.

(7) Shri E. Ahamed, MOS (EA) led the delegation to Mauritius from 13-14 January 2005 on Small Island Nations Conference.

(8) Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, MOS (RIS) led a delegation to Honduras, Mexico and Suriname from February 10-22, 2005.

(9) Minister of External Affairs visited Kabul, Afghanistan on 15 February 2005.

(10) Minister of External Affairs visited Islamabad on the invitation of his counterpart Foreign Minister of Pakistan Khurshid Kasuri from February 15-17, 2005.

(c) & (d): The details of discussions held during the visits, outcome thereof, and areas where cooperation was agreed upon are as follows:

SWITZERLAND

Political and Security issues and cooperation between the armed forces of India and Switzerland were discussed during the visit of Mr. Samuel Schmid, Vice President of Switzerland.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

President Vladimir V. Putin visited India for the fifth India-Russia Annual Summit. During his visit he held discussions with PM followed by delegation level talks. The discussions focused on a wide range of issues of bilateral, regional and international interest. President Putin reiterated support for India`s candidature for a permanent seat in the expanded UN Security Council. India assured its support for Russia`s early entry into the WTO.

During the visit of President Putin, a total of 11 documents were signed. They included the Joint Declaration signed by Prime Minster of India and the President of Russian Federation and four Inter-governmental agreements covering the areas of Space, Consular and Regional cooperation. The Joint Declaration emphasizes the strategic partnership between India and Russia and also noted the transformation in the global environment in the recent past and stressed the need for a new international architecture based on a multi-polar world. A substantial and new emphasis on economic relations including the field of energy, IT and banking has been made. Six MoUs in Banking and Energy sectors were signed during the visit.

MOROCCO

The Moroccan Prime Minister called on Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister and held discussions with Power, Agriculture and other Economic Ministries on bilateral cooperation. An Agreement of Air Services and MOUs in Power and Agriculture Sector were signed during the visit.

ISRAEL

During the visit of Vice Prime Minister Olmert, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations with particular emphasis on strengthening and expanding economic relationship. VPM Olmert and the Commerce and Industry Minister decided to establish a Joint Study Group for a comprehensive economic partnership agreement with Israel. A letter of intent was also signed by VPM Olmert and the MOS for S&T for early finalization of MoU on Industrial R&D.

SLOVAKIA

During the State Visit, the Slovak President met with the President, Vice-President, RM, EAM and Minister of Commerce & Industry. The talks covered the entire gamut of bilateral relations.

MALAYSIA

During the visit, the Malaysian Prime Minister called on the President and Vice President, held delegation level talks with the Prime Minister. He also had separate meetings with the External Affairs Minister, Finance Minister, Home Minister and the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas as well as with the Chairperson of the UPA. The discussions covered the entire gamut of India`s bilateral relations with Malaysia, its growing partnership with the ASEAN and several international issues of mutual concern.

Enhancing bilateral economic ties was a key focus of Prime Minister Badawi`s visit. One of the significant decisions taken following delegation level talks with the Prime Minister was to explore the possibility of concluding a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with Malaysia. It was agreed to set up a Joint Study Group to undertake the feasibility study for the CECA. It was also agreed to forge closer cooperation in the future growth sectors such as Infrastructure, Information and Communication Technology, Biotechnology, Pharmaceuticals, Healthcare and Tourism.

Education was identified as a major sector for future cooperation, including various collaborative and exchange projects between universities and research institutions of the two countries, mutual recognition of degrees and exchange of academicians and research scholars.

A total of twelve agreements and MOUs for cooperation in areas ranging from information technology, space science and satellite technology to television software and infrastructure were signed during Prime Minister Badawi`s visit to India. These included an agreement to set up a joint venture between Antrix Corporation and MEASAT International for joint marketing of satellite capacity and for procurement, launch and putting into orbit of MEASAT-4 satellite from the Antrix corporation; and a concession agreement for the development, construction, operation and maintenance of Hyderabad Airport between the Ministry of Civil Aviation and a consortium which included a Malaysian Company.

SURINAME

Vice President of Suriname visited India as Chief Guest at the Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas.

At Suriname, MOS (RIS) led India-Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Political Dialogue and addressed the CARICOM Conference. The bilateral cooperation between India and CARICOM was reviewed the visit helped to strengthen the political understanding.

QATAR

In Kerala the Minister unveiled a model of Petronet`s proposed LNG terminal at Kochi which is expected to receive LNG supplies from Qatar from 2008 onwards.

GAMBIA

This was the first ever visit by a high-level delegation from Gambia. The visiting dignitary discussed issues of bilateral and multilateral concern. Both sides agreed to work together in the multilateral fora.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

The visiting Minister had meetings with the External Affairs Minister, Minister for Human Resource Development, Minister of State for Information Technology and Minister of Commerce and Industry. Mr. Chan had discussions on possibilities of increasing interaction and cooperation in diverse areas with India.

CANADA

Prime Minister of Canada held discussions with Prime Minister of India that focussed on expansion of bilateral cooperation between India and Canada

They agreed to strengthen environmental cooperation, Science and Technology Initiative, partnership for prosperity that would lead to enhanced trade and investment and strengthen people to people contact.

CHILE

Chilean President held discussions of mutual interest with President, PM, EAM. India and Chile agreed on the urgent need for reforms of the UN and expansion of the Security Council to reflect the new realities of the international situation. Three agreements for cooperation were signed during the visit, namely, Framework Agreement for Economic Cooperation, MoU between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Chilean Agricultural Research Institute and MoU on Sanitary and Phytosanitary issues between the Ministries of Agriculture.

SENEGAL

The Minister came to convey his government`s condolences at the Tsunami disaster and the passing away of Shri Narasimha Rao & Shri J. N. Dixit. The visit resulted in the reaffirmation of the close ties between India and Senegal.

BHUTAN

During the King`s visit, India and Bhutan signed three MOUs, viz., -

(a) MOU on Rail Links between bordering towns in India and Bhutan

(b) MOU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Allied Sectors, and

(c) MOU on the preparation of Detailed Project Report for Punatsangtchhu (Stage II) and Mangdechhu Hydro-Electric Projects in Bhutan

CONGO

It was the first visit by a Foreign Minister of Congo in 15 years. He discussed issues of bilateral and multilateral concern, which

resulted in establishing close links between both countries. Both sides agreed to work together in establishing stronger economic linkages and co-operation in multilateral fora.

ICELAND

Apart from attending the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit organized by TERI, the Icelandic President had meetings with the President, PM and EAM and discussed ways and means of strengthening bilateral cooperation.

FINLAND

Bilateral political and economic relations were discussed during the visit with the Indian authorities.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Visit was to attend the IETF.

ITALY

President Ciampi called on the President and held discussions with Prime Minister. A bilateral meeting between External Affairs Minister, Shri Natwar Singh and Italian Foreign Minister Mr. Gianfranco Fini was also held during the visit. The focus of the visit was to revive the political dialogue between the two countries and to further deepen and strengthen bilateral economic and commercial ties, intensify cooperation in the field of Science and Technology, research education and culture.

Six Agreements were signed after the talks: an MOU on Political Cooperation, an MoU on Fishery and Aqua-culture Production, MoU on Cooperation for the Conservation of Paintings of the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, an MoU between the Indian Ministry of S &T and Italian Ministry for Education, University and Research, Programme of Cooperation for the years 2005-07 under the Indo-Italian S&T Agreement and an Agreement between ISRO and Italian Space Agency on the Cooperation in Space, Science, Technology and Applications. Technical Agreements in the field of bioinformatics, neuroinformatics, Information sciences & Applicable Mathematics, Information and Communication Technology, Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems and Emerging Web Applications were signed between the centres of excellence on both sides during the visit.

UK

Mr. Jack Straw held meetings with External Affairs Minister, Shri Natwar Singh, Home Minister Shri Shivraj Patil and National Security Advisor Shri M K Narayanan. The discussions focussed on bilateral relations and developments in our neighbourhood and global issues of mutual concern.

AUSTRIA

Bilateral cooperation and regional issues of mutual interest were discussed with the Indian leadership during the State Visit.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

External Affairs Minister visited Seoul to chair, with ROK Foreign Minister Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the third session of the India-ROK Joint Commission meeting. During the meeting, both sides reiterated the importance of maintaining close and regular consultations so as to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in various areas. It was agreed to further promote exchanges and interaction in the defence field. The two sides agreed to convene the first meeting of the newly established India-ROK Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue in India in the first quarter of 2005. The meeting also reviewed the progress in commercial and economic relations, noting with satisfaction the growth of two-way trade volume between the two countries in recent years. In this context, both sides noted the decision for the setting up of a Joint Study Group to comprehensively review bilateral linkages in trade and investment relations. Both sides reiterated their desire to promote cooperation in various areas including infrastructure, information and communication technology, petrochemicals, textiles, oil and gas field development, automobiles, shipbuilding, iron and steel, pharmaceuticals and agriculture. During the visit, EAM also called on ROK President Mr. Roh Moo-hyun and Speaker of the ROK National Assembly Mr. Won Ki-kim and held discussions on bilateral relations, regional and global issues.

OMAN

Bilateral relations between Oman and India were reviewed. Discussions were also held on various international and regional issues, 50th anniversary of Indo-Oman diplomatic ties, defence cooperation, trade and industry, art, culture, energy and Indian community`s interests. Oman announced its support to India`s candidature for Permanent Membership of the UN Security Council. During the visit EAM signed the Extradition Treaty between India and Oman and an MOU on cooperation in the area of audit.

SAUDI ARABIA

Arrangements for Haj 2005 were reviewed.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

EAM called on UAE President Sheikh Khalifa, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, and Dubai Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid for in-depth discussions on bilateral, regional and international issues. UAE announced its support for India`s candidature for Permanent Membership of the UN Security Council.

It was agreed to coordinate actions and positions of both countries towards establishing a long-term bilateral partnership.

EAM also chaired the Conference of Indian HOMs in 15 countries in the region.

INDONESIA

The Special ASEAN Leaders` Meeting issued a Declaration on Action to strengthen emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the aftermath of the earthquake and Tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004.

KENYA / SUDAN

The Indian delegation in Nairobi attended signing ceremony of Sudan Peace Agreement and had meetings with African Union Chair, Nigeria and other members of IGAD and Sudan`s Leaders on capacity building in Sudan.

MAURITIUS

MOS (EA) led the delegation to Mauritius to attend International meeting to review implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

MEXICO

MOS(RIS) called on the Foreign Minister of Mexico and discussed issues of mutual interest.

HONDURAS

MOS(RIS) held discussions with the Foreign Ministers of Central America (SICA) at Honduras as well as called on President of Honduras and discussed issues of mutual concern including cooperation between India and SICA.

AFGHANISTAN

During the visit, EAM called on President Karzai and Baba-e-Millat, former King Zahir Shah. The discussions with the Afghan leaders focused on Indian assistance to Afghanistan. EAM also inaugurated the new surgical block of the Indira Gandhi Hospital, which has been reconstructed with India`s assistance and handed over 49 vehicles to the Afghan National Army.

PAKISTAN

External Affairs Minister visited Islamabad on the invitation of his counterpart Foreign Minister of Pakistan Khurshid Kasuri. He called on President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaukat Aziz and held delegation level talks with Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri. This was the first bilateral visit of the External Affairs Minister of India to Pakistan since 1989. During the visit both sides agreed-

(i) on mutually acceptable procedures for establishing a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad;

(ii) to look at the gas pipeline through Pakistan subject to satisfaction of India`s concerns related to security and assured supplies;

(iii) finalize agreements on Pre-notification of Missile Tests, MOU between Indian Coastguards and Pakistan`s Maritime Security Agency, and MOU between Narcotics Control Authorities;

(iv) to tie up technical details to start a bus service between Amritsar and Lahore, and also to agreed religious places such as Nankana Sahib;

(v) to initiate discussions on agreements on:

(a) Reducing Risk of Nuclear Accidents or Unauthorized Use of Nuclear Weapons;

(b) Preventing Incidents at Sea. Both sides also agreed to consider further measures to alleviate the situation of civilian prisoners and apprehended fishermen. EAM conveyed India`s

readiness to start the Khokrapar-Munnabao rail link from October 2005, and requested Pakistan to expedite their preparations.